

REMARKS

The Examiner's Office Action has been thoroughly considered. By way of the remarks and amendments herein, Applicants believe their application to be in condition for allowance.

In the instant Office Action, Examiner Dang has reiterated his previous rejection of independent Claim 16, and dependent Claims 17 and 19, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Yamahata, Japanese Patent 08-203435. Moreover, the Examiner has once more rejected dependent Claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, as being unpatentable over Yamahata, further in view of Costas et al., U.S. Patent Number 6,137,125 and dependent Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, as being unpatentable over Yamahata in view of Kasuya, Japanese Patent 08-017798. Examiner Dang also initiated a new rejection of Claims 21, 24, 26 and 29 as being anticipated by Lin, U.S. Patent Number 5,801,093.

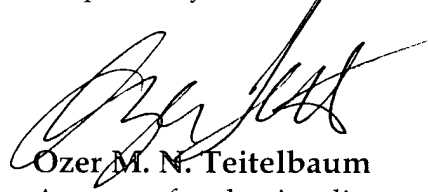
In his most recent Office Action, Examiner Dang notably objected to Claims 22, 23, 25, 27, 28 and 30 as being dependent on a rejected base claim. The Examiner goes further to state that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form so as to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's novelty and obviousness rejections for the reasons stated in their previous response. For expediency of prosecution, Applicants, however, withdraw Claims 16-20 from consideration without prejudice, reserving all rights to pursue these claims separately. Applicants hereby have amended independent Claim 21 to incorporate a limitation from objected to dependent Claim 22. Consequently, Applicants advance that, in view of the Examiner Dang's objections, independent Claim 21 is now in allowable form. As independent Claim 21 recites novel and non-obvious subject matter, Applicants advance that the remaining claims that depend from independent Claim 21 - namely, dependent Claims 22, 23, 24, 25 and newly inserted Claim 32 - are also in allowable form.

Likewise, Applicants have amended independent Claim 26 to incorporate a limitation from objected to dependent Claim 27. Consequently, Applicants advance that, in view of the Examiner's objections, independent Claim 26 is now in allowable form. As independent Claim 26 recites novel and non-obvious subject matter, Applicants advance that the remaining claims that depend from independent Claim 26 - namely, dependent Claims 27, 28, 29, 30 and newly inserted Claim 31 - are also in allowable form.

Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to Examiner Dang's Office Action. Thus, in view of the hereinabove remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of their patent application and its claims. To that end, if the Examiner feels that a conference might expedite the prosecution of this case, he is cordially invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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